

Serial No. 09/738,374
January 13, 2004
Reply to the Office Action dated September 17, 2003
Page 7 of 8

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 7-19 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, Applicants AMEND claims 7-9 and CANCEL claims 1-4 and 6.

Applicants greatly appreciate the allowance of claims 10-19 by the Examiner.

Applicants greatly appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 7-9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have amended claims 7-9 to be in independent form and to recite all the features of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Examiner objected to claim 9 for allegedly containing minor informalities. Applicants have amended claim 9 to correct the minor informalities noted by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claim 9.

Claims 1-4 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kondo et al. (US 5,949,294). Applicants have canceled claims 1-4 and 6.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that none of the prior art of record, applied alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the unique combination and arrangement of elements recited in claim 7-11 and 19 of the present application. Claims 12-18 depend upon claims 10 and 11 and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons that claims 10 and 11 are allowable.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are solicited.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition the Commissioner for a ONE-month extension of time, extending to January 17, 2004, the period for response to the Office Action dated September 17, 2003.

Serial No. 09/738,374

January 13, 2004

Reply to the Office Action dated September 17, 2003

Page 8 of 8

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1353.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: January 13, 2004


Attorneys for Applicants

Joseph R. Keating
Registration No. 37,368

Christopher A. Bennett
Registration No. 46,710

KEATING & BENNETT LLP
10400 Eaton Place, Suite 312
Fairfax, VA 22030
Telephone: (703) 385-5200
Facsimile: (703) 385-5080